

## Hydropower Project Under Construction in the Klamath Basin

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A hydropower plant that is under construction near Klamath Falls, Oregon, is rather small but there's a big emphasis these days on renewable energy.

President Obama, during his State of the Union address on January 23, 2012, said the country needs an “all-out, all of the above strategy that develops every available source of American energy—a strategy that’s cleaner, cheaper, and full of new jobs.”

Overnight, the development of a hydroelectric plant in the Klamath Project drew a lot more attention.

Reclamation had already granted permission for the Klamath Irrigation District to build the facility in the Klamath Basin. The district, which began work at the site in December 2011, expects to complete the plant in April 2012.

When in full operation, the flow of water will allow production of up to 1.1 megawatts of electricity. (One megawatt, which is one million watts, is enough to supply 1,000 homes.) In comparison, the hydroelectric facility at Shasta Dam can produce up to 710 megawatts.

But a megawatt is a megawatt and the Klamath Irrigation District is seeking to reduce electricity costs, an effort that is supported by local governments, businesses and irrigators in the area.

The hydropower plant is taking advantage of the fact that water flows downhill, even in relatively small canals. In this case, the district is using irrigation water running from the A Canal in the Klamath Project, down to the C Canal, to produce electricity. And that's where the plant gets its name: the Klamath C-Drop Hydro Project.



Above, C Canal flows at the height of irrigation season. The photographs below show the progress of the hydropower plant construction.



The district's contractor first removed an old concrete structure at the site, then began building an intake structure, a forebay, a powerhouse for generating equipment, and a 150-foot transmission line. An existing fish screen on A Canal, upstream of the project site, helps prevent fish from entering C Canal.

The Region's Klamath Basin Area Office is overseeing the district's construction of the facility.

